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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 80/NO. 36 SEPTEMBER 26, 2016

INSIDE

Month of action across Cuba: No to US embargo, return Guantánamo!

— PAGE 7

US, Moscow make 'peace' deal, Ankara attacks Kurds

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Washington and Moscow announced they have brokered a partial cease-fire in Syria beginning Sept. 12 between the regime of Bashar al-Assad, which is backed by Moscow and Tehran, and opposition groups backed by the U.S., Turkish and Saudi Arabian governments. If the truce holds, Washington and Moscow say they will begin to coordinate military operations against Islamic State and the former Nusra Front. The Barack Obama administration has been pursuing such a deal for months, in hopes of stabilizing the region in the interests of U.S. imperialism.

At the same time, Washington continues to back a Turkish government offensive inside northern Syria aimed primarily at preventing any expansion of Rojava — the Kurdish-controlled region in northeastern Syria and a smaller area around Afrin in the northwest.

Obama's course reflects the relative decline in U.S. imperialism's military, economic and political power

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Standing Rock Sioux lead protests for rights, dignity

Fight against building pipeline on reservation

Reuters/Andrew Cullen

Standing Rock tribe members lead protest Sept. 9 in Cannon Ball, North Dakota, to stop desecration of tribal land, protect drinking water. Thousands have joined protest camp.

BY DAVID ROSENFELD AND ROSE ENGSTROM

STANDING ROCK SIOUX INDIAN RESERVATION — Members of more than 200 Native American tribes and supporters have come from every corner of North America to stand with the Standing Rock Sioux in their fight to stop the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline near their reservation. Thousands have made their way here to join the fight to defend sovereign treaty rights and against potential fouling of the area's water supplies, gathering at this remote protest camp on the banks of the Cannonball River.

We joined them as a Socialist Workers Party solidarity and fact-

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Socialist Workers Party: Workers aren't 'deplorables'!

BY MAGGIE TROWE

The 2016 election is increasingly focused on the working class.

As the Socialist Workers Party talks to thousands of workers at their doorsteps about a way forward for working people, the capitalist party presidential candidates, viewed negatively

FIGHT FOR HEALTH CARE, RETIREMENT FOR ALL
— SWP statement, p. 9

by the majority of the population, face anger and skepticism from millions of workers ravaged by the effects of the grinding capitalist depression.

"You could put half of [Donald] Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamaphobic — you name it," Democrat Hillary Clinton told a New York fundraising gala Sept. 9. "Now, some of those folks — they are irredeemable, but thankfully they are not America."

"That's what Clinton and the ruling-class families who support her really think about workers and farmers," Socialist Workers Party presi-

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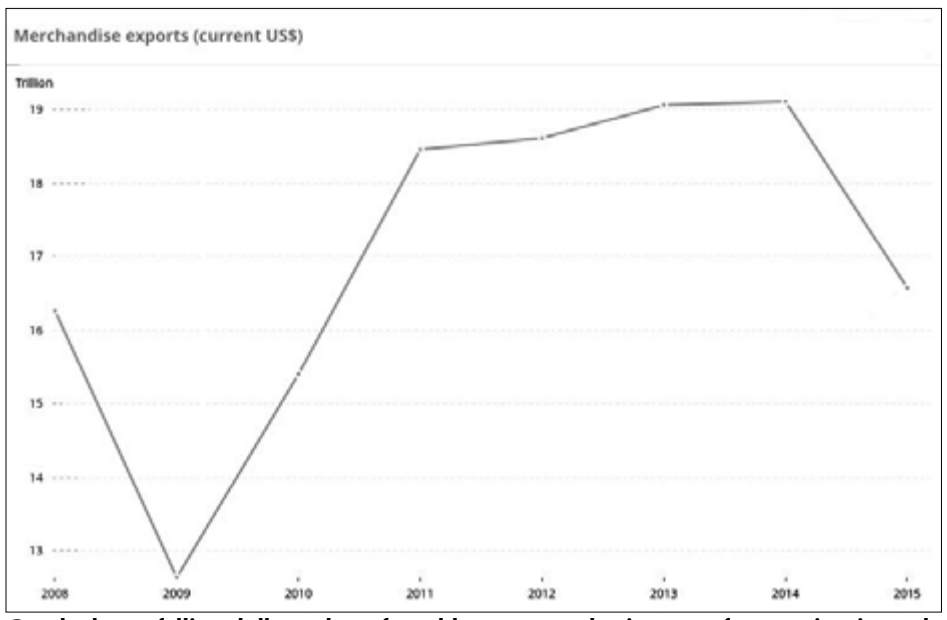
As capitalist trade slows, bosses step up attacks on working class



Graph shows falling dollar value of world exports under impact of stagnation in trade volume over last few years, combined with plummeting prices of many commodities.

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

World trade is slowing, reflected in the recent bankruptcy of the South Korean Hanjin Shipping Co. Workers on dozens of ships loaded with $14 billion in goods have been stranded on the high seas.

The slow-burning depression conditions and growing boss attacks facing workers today — with no end in sight — are rooted in a historic worldwide economic crisis of falling capitalist production and trade.

The capitalist rulers have sought to revive profitable production by turning to their central banks and implementing a combination of "quantitative easing" money-printing binges along with slashing interest rates. Interest rates in the U.S. have been kept at nearly zero percent since 2008. Tokyo and the rulers of a number of countries in Europe have imposed

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Coal miners demand gov't protect health care, retirement benefits

BY MAGGIE TROWE

WASHINGTON — More than 5,000 retired and working miners rallied in front of the Capitol here Sept. 8 in a national action demanding Congress pass legislation to maintain pensions and health care won in 1946 for retired miners. Tens of thousands stand to lose their benefits in coming months as dozens of mine bosses, including at the five largest companies, have declared bankruptcy.

Tens of millions of workers across

Continued on page 5

US imperialist power declines across Asia as Beijing expands

BY MARK THOMPSON

President Barack Obama's last official visit to Asia in early September highlighted the continuing challenge to Washington's domination of the Pacific by China's growing economic and military capacity. This is despite Obama's "pivot" to Asia to counter Beijing's influence that has been a central foreign policy initiative of his administration.

Obama visited Hangzhou, China, Sept. 4-5 for the G-20 summit, a meet-

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Momentum grows for Oct. 9 'Free Oscar López' protest 7

–On the picket line, p. 5–

L.A. Farmer John meatpackers push back concessions

Tens of millions of workers carry out one-day strike in India

Abu-Jamal leads fight for hepatitis care for prisoners

BY SETH GALINSKY

A lawsuit and political fight by Mumia Abu-Jamal seeking life-saving medical treatment has helped expose the refusal of Pennsylvania prison authorities to treat thousands of workers behind bars infected with hepatitis C. U.S. District Judge Robert Mariani dismissed the lawsuit on a technicality Aug. 31, but encouraged Abu-Jamal to refile, saying Department of Corrections policies "may well constitute deliberate indifference" to the lives of prisoners.

Abu-Jamal, a radio journalist and former Black Panther, has been in prison for 34 years. He was convicted in 1982 and given the death penalty on frame-up charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. Under pressure of a growing international campaign, the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned his death sentence in 2011, ordering him to serve life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Abu-Jamal filed the lawsuit after officials told him he was not eligible for treatment because he was not sick enough.

Abu-Jamal sued the wrong officials, he needs to sue the prison system's hepatitis C committee, Mariani ruled. Even though that committee did not exist when the suit was filed, his lawyers said, they will refile the case.

"This is not just about myself," Abu-Jamal said in a taped statement Sept. 7, available at prisonradio.org. "There are over 6,000 men and women, according to the DOC's numbers, who are infected with hepatitis C and are not being treated."

Hepatitis C can be cured 90 to 95 percent of the time, with a 12-week daily regimen of a pill that costs $1,000 each. According to the *Guardian* newspaper, only five prisoners in Pennsylvania have been given the pills.

The Department of Corrections told the court "there simply is not enough money to treat every individual." Under the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, prisoners are entitled to adequate medical care.

Dr. Paul Noel, chief of clinical services for the corrections department, testified that their protocol is to "identify those with the most serious liver disease and to treat them first" and then move down the list to "lower priorities." Using medical terminology, he said that a prisoner has to have brain or liver damage, or be on the verge of bleeding in the esophagus, before they will get the pills.

Abu-Jamal has scarring on his liver. But if he got the medicine now he would be "jumping line," Noel argued. "Whoever is lower down will have to wait longer."

"Mumia's petition is to get everybody treatment, he's bringing the line up," Pam Africa, a leader of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, told the *Militant* by phone Sept. 9. "People would not have known about the horrors of the protocol and they've been trying and trying to keep it quiet."

"We've got to demand this fair and better treatment for thousands of men and women who are held captive in the DOC," Abu-Jamal said. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says one-third of those in U.S. jails have hepatitis C.

Prison authorities have treated Abu-Jamal vindictively, unsuccessfully trying to block his move to the general prison population from death row. They have often arbitrarily thrown him into solitary confinement. And they have refused to allow him to have doctors of his choice examine him.

To get more information or join the fight to get medical treatment for Abu-Jamal and other prisoners, visit: www.freemumia.com.

Montreal: Kurds protest Ankara's attacks in Syria

Militant/Pierre-Luc Filion

MONTREAL — Chanting "Long live Kurdistan," 50 Kurds and supporters rallied here Sept. 6 to condemn the Turkish government's military offensive against the Kurds in northern Syria. They also demanded that the Canadian government, a NATO ally of Ankara, end its complicity.

The signs above in French say, "The YPG forces who are fighting for humanity's freedom are being attacked by Turkey" and "The West betrays the Kurds and allows them to be massacred." The YPG, the People's Protection Units, are the militia that controls the Kurdish region in northern Syria, known as Rojava, and has been the most effective force fighting against the reactionary Islamic State there.

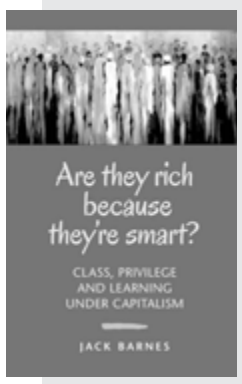
The protest outside the office of Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs Stéphane Dion was called by the Kurdish Foundation of Quebec and Rojava Solidarity Montreal.

— PIERRE-LUC FILION AND ANNETTE KOURI

Are They Rich Because They're Smart?

Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism

by Jack Barnes



"In the coming battles forced upon us by the capitalist rulers workers will begin to transform ourselves and our attitudes toward life, work and each other. Only then will we learn what we're capable of becoming."

Special offer: $7 for book, $10 for book and 'Militant' subscription

See page 8 to contact the Socialist Workers Party or Communist League nearest you.

Our party is your party!

THE MILITANT

Back protests against racism, cop killings!

The 'Militant' backs San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick's stand against cop killings and oppression of Black people. As do a growing number of athletes who are protesting during the singing of the U.S. national anthem at sports events.

AP/Chris Carlson

Colin Kaepernick, center, kneels during U.S. national anthem before game Sept. 1.

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Workers aren't 'deplorables'

Continued from front page

dential candidate Alyson Kennedy told the *Militant* Sept. 14. "They try to explain away the broad dissatisfaction and frustration of millions of us — particularly targeting those who are Caucasian or live in rural areas — as stupid, backward and bigoted."

Republican candidate Trump was quick to take advantage of the widespread anger against his opponent for writing off large swaths of the working class. One of his new campaign ads describes Clinton as "viciously demonizing hard-working people like you."

Some workers who back him made and are wearing T-shirts saying "Adorable Deplorable."

At a rally in Ashville, North Carolina, Sept. 12, Trump invited working-class supporters on stage to talk about Clinton's remarks. "My wife and I represent nondeplorable people," an African-American school principal said to cheers.

Trump told those at the Sept. 12 National Guard Association conference in Baltimore that he is backed by "millions of working-class families who just want a better future and a good job."

Clinton, feeling some pressure, temporized Sept. 10, saying, "I regret saying 'half' — that was wrong." But her national press secretary Brian Fallon said, "The larger point of what she said on Friday remains true and it's something we're not going to apologize for."

Her supporters in the liberal press pushed harder. "If anything, when it comes to Trump's racist support, she might have low-balled the number," *Washington Post* pundit Dana Milbank opined Sept. 12.

"The capitalist rulers fear the working class, and that is who they see at Trump's rallies," Kennedy said. "Trump claims he's the man for the working class, but he represents the interests of the wealthy rulers as much as the Clintons. His rightist demagogy targets our class — whether it's workers without papers, Black protesters or workers demanding a $15 an hour minimum wage.

"Their goal in scapegoating the majority of the working class is to divide our class and pit us against each other," she said. "They're stepping up attacks on jobs, unions, safety on the job, health care and more. And they're worried we will rise up.

"No matter which one is elected, the capitalists will be in the driver's seat," Kennedy said, "Clinton or Trump will rule in their interest and attack our class, in the U.S. and around the world."

SWP campaigns at miners' rally

Kennedy and her running mate Osborne Hart campaigned at the United Mine Workers of America rally in Washington, D.C., Sept. 8.

"Between Trump and Hillary I don't know who would be the lesser of two evils," Dwight Jeffrey, 59, a retired member of UMWA Local 1058 in West Virginia, told Hart.

"Clinton wants to lay off miners and Trump wants to help mine bosses," Hart said. "The capitalist class rules through a two-party system, the lesser of two evils is always evil. The Socialist Workers Party is the working-class party."

"Miners' pensions used to be guaranteed by royalties on the tonnage," Jeffrey said. "The problem started when it became based on man-hours worked. Mine equipment increased production, but since man-hours went down, we lost funding for our health care."

"The way I see it, cradle-to-grave health care is what miners and *all* workers need," Hart said. "We can't let them be tied to company profits. The working class produces all the wealth, it all comes out of our labor, and the bosses expropriate the lion's share. Health care must be a social right for all."

Kennedy worked in coal mines in Alabama, Colorado, Utah and West Virginia. She joined the UMWA in 1981. From 2003 to 2006 she was among those in the front ranks of a union-organizing battle at the Co-Op coal mine outside Huntington, Utah, where miners, the majority of them Mexican-born, fought for UMWA representation.

When SWP campaigners go door to door in working-class neighborhoods introducing the party, they find that most back neither candidate. "This system is broken. The two main candidates are an idiot and a liar," Beth Onan, from Morganfield, Kentucky, told Kennedy.

"I started work on Nov. 7, 1977, and then a month later I was on strike for 111 days, one of the best experiences I ever had," Terry Lester, 57, a retired miner who came by bus from Danville, West Virginia, told Hart.

Capitalist bosses were beginning to feel the pinch of what has become a deep capitalist economic crisis. The coal bosses demanded miners give up the union's right to strike over unsafe conditions as they sought to speed up production.

"That strike made gains and set an example," Hart said. "It pushed back the bosses and the government."

"You're right, they're both the problem," Lester said. "You can't convince me the government doesn't know what the coal companies are up to. They just let them get away with it."

"It's a capitalist government," Hart responded. "What they do to miners is a part of a broader offensive against the working class, against our humanity. That's why we are building a revolutionary party, to fight for a workers and farmers government."

Mary Martin and Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

SWP VP candidate addresses Sydney dockworkers

Militant/Ron Poulsen

SYDNEY — "Workers everywhere face the consequences of the deep economic crisis of capitalism, a crisis that is irreversible. The working class needs to organize and unite to fight independently of the bourgeois parties and their politicians like Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump in the U.S.," Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for United States vice president, told more than 200 unionists here at a worksite meeting, above, of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Union.

During his Aug. 23-27 visit, Hart also spoke to 40 delegates at the monthly meeting of Unions NSW, the statewide federation, and Hutchison Port dockworkers, members of the Maritime Union of Australia, on their lunch break.

"Workers are being hammered by the bosses and the government," Hart told the construction workers. "We need to organize, unionize and build solidarity to strengthen our ability to fight effectively. There is no 'lesser evil' for the working class — whether Trump or Clinton is elected, the attacks on us will deepen.

"In Cuba the workers and farmers took political power to reorganize society in the interests of humanity," he said. "That's what we have to do."

Several workers stayed after the meeting to continue talking. Three subscribed to the *Militant*. Plumber Robert Bell later phoned the Communist League to get a copy of Pathfinder's *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

— RON POULSEN

—CALENDAR—

CANADA
Calgary

The Working-Class Alternative to the Twin Capitalist Parties. Hear Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party Candidate for U.S. Vice President. Thurs., Sept. 22, 7 p.m. *Dragon City Mall, 328 Centre St. SE, Unit 246. Tel.: (403) 478-2496.*

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

CALIFORNIA
Oakland

Solidarity With Native American Struggle in North Dakota. Free Leonard Peltier! Speaker: Jeff Powers, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Congress. Fri., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. *675 Hegenberger Road, Suite 250. Tel.: (510) 686-1351.*

CANADA
Montreal

US Elections/Trudeau's China Trip: What Are the Stakes for Workers in Debate over Trans-Pacific Trade Pact? Speaker: Michel Prairie, Communist League. Donation: $5. Fri., Sept. 23, *7:30 p.m. 7107 St. Denis, Room 204. Tel.: (514) 272-5840.*

Join SWP going door to door! Contribute to campaign fund!

BY JOHN STUDER

Campaigners for Alyson Kennedy and Osborne Hart, the Socialist Workers Party presidential ticket, receive a wide-open hearing as they knock on workers' doors across the country and around the world. They explain today's crisis of capitalist production and trade, join protests against the bosses' efforts to make working people pay in an effort to boost their profits, and ask people to join the SWP.

Campaign supporters mounted a vigorous and very successful effort this summer, going door to door in working-class communities, introducing the party and its program, getting *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and subscriptions to the *Militant* around, as well as gathering signatures to put the party on the ballot.

The campaign has raised the goal in its fund drive from $30,000 to $40,000 through the Nov. 8 election. This is needed both to cover unexpected expenses from the summer's expanded campaigning in Vermont, Tennessee, Utah and elsewhere and to carry out a bold final two months of campaigning. Kennedy is currently in the U.K. and France, after which she will make a solidarity tour to the people of Puerto Rico, who live in Washington's largest colony.

More than $22,000 has been collected so far and another $17,500 remains to be raised. This will come from contributions at public meetings where the candidates speak as they crisscross the country, that come in the mail and are offered from workers as campaigners knock on their doors.

Help us go over the top! Contact the party in your area (see page 8), or the Socialist Workers Party 2016 Campaign, 227 W. 29th St., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Recommended reading

The Clintons' Antilabor Legacy: Roots of 2008 World Financial Crisis
in *New International* #14

"The Clinton administration consolidated an anti-working-class shift in Democratic Party domestic policy that increased the *political convergence* of the two leading parties of the employing class."

— Jack Barnes

pathfinderpress.com

US, Moscow Syria 'peace' deal

Continued from front page

in the world. There is growing agreement within the U.S. ruling class that Washington and its allies are incapable of achieving victory in the area.

The U.S. intervention and widening war have spread chaos in the region and a refugee disaster that is roiling nation-states across Europe. CIA Director John Brennan said Sept. 7 that he doubted "Syria and Iraq can be put back together again."

The only road to any semblance of stability, Washington now believes, is a bloc with Moscow.

Whether the truce holds or not, working people in Syria will continue to face devastating consequences.

A shaky, limited agreement

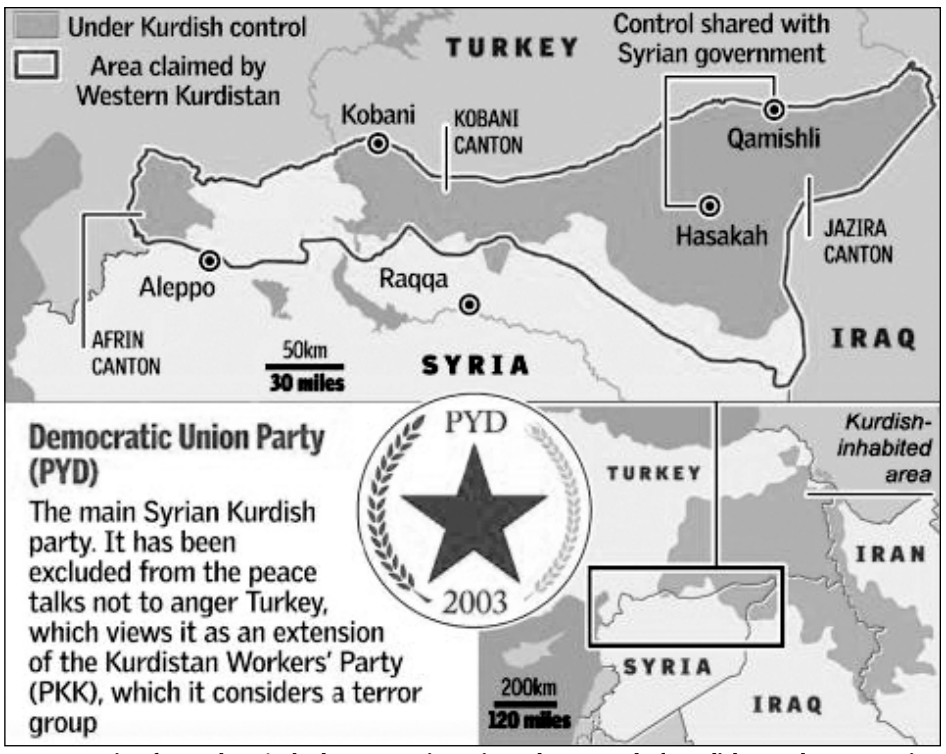
Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced the deal in Geneva Sept. 9. Kerry said it calls for "a sustained period of reduced violence" and allows delivery of humanitarian relief to residents of Aleppo and other areas. If the truce holds a week, Washington and Moscow say they will begin coordinated attacks on Islamic State and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham. The latter group, formerly known as the Nusra Front, had been affiliated with al-Qaeda but says it no longer is.

Washington is pressuring other opponents of the Syrian government to "distance themselves in every way possible" from Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, Kerry said. And Lavrov said Moscow would assure that Assad's air force doesn't function in the areas "singled out for Russian-American cooperation."

The Syrian government, Tehran and the Lebanese Hezbollah group, which supports Assad, have said they will take part in the cease-fire. So have many of the armed groupings opposing Assad, while voicing pessimism about any lasting break from combat. Citing an "opposition source," Reuters reported Sept. 12 that "armed groups would continue to operate with Jabhat Fatah al-Sham ... because it was impossible to disentangle the forces that fought side by side."

State Department envoy Michael Ratney told opposition forces they had to separate from former al-Qaeda forces or face "severe consequences."

The civil war in Syria began in 2011, after the Assad government crushed popular protests calling for greater political rights. Since then the regime has fought a shifting array of opposition groups. It has used barrel bombs, starvation sieges and gas attacks against civilians. Washington, Moscow and the competing capitalist powers in the region have intervened in the conflict, seeking to advance their own interests.



Maps, caption from *The Hindu* show areas in Syria under control of Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), militia tied to PYD. Turkish military has intervened, blocking unification of Kurds.

In the vacuum created by the war, the jihadist Islamic State — organized by former officers from Saddam Hussein's Baathist army in Iraq and elements from al-Qaeda — was able to seize substantial areas in both Iraq and Syria. Islamic State is now weakening, losing territory and recruits.

Ankara deepens attacks on Kurds

The most effective fighters against Islamic State have been the Kurds — the peshmerga militia of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq and the People's Protection Units (YPG) in Syria. Their advances have given a boost to the struggle for national rights and self-determination throughout the Kurdish-populated areas, including in Turkey and Iran — a development all of the ruling classes in the region as well as Washington oppose.

Ankara is continuing its offensive in northern Syria, sending tanks, troops and Turkish-backed Syrian fighters across the border to occupy territory between Jarablus — just west of the Euphrates River — and Afrin. In a Sept. 4 meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Obama told him to "finish the job."

Turkish officials have renewed talk of creating what it calls a "safe zone" where some of the roughly 3 million Syrian refugees now in Turkey would be relocated. Turkish officials say 20,000 have already been returned to Jarablus.

Washington is demanding the YPG withdraw east of the Euphrates River. At the same time, U.S. officials are trying to work with both the YPG and Turkish government to launch an offensive against Islamic State in Raqqa, the capital of its "caliphate."

Ankara is also pressing its offensive against the Kurdish population inside Turkey, in the name of fighting the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Turkish authorities suspended more than 11,000 teachers in the province of Diyarbakir Sept. 8, alleging they had links to the PKK. When hundreds of teachers protested the next day, dozens were detained and their rally dispersed with water cannon. "This is an attack on our unionized struggle," Suleyman Guler, the provincial head of the teachers union, told Reuters.

Regardless of what happens next in Syria, workers in the region face the prospect of continued war and turmoil.

A Sept. 8 article in the *Washington Post*, titled, "A Reminder of the Permanent Wars: Dozens of U.S. Airstrikes in Six Countries," pointed to Washington's bombings and attacks in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen over the Labor Day weekend.

Capitalism, not Saudi conspiracy, behind oil price drop

The Militant *received the following letter from a reader in the Middle East.*

The article "Migrant workers in Saudi Arabia face mass layoffs" by Seth Galinsky, which appeared in the Aug. 22, 2016, issue of the *Militant*, provided a useful picture of the situation confronting immigrant workers in the oil-rich countries of the Middle East. The article contains the following sentence, however, which deals with a very important subject that needs some elaboration:

"After the drop in oil prices from more than $100 a barrel in July 2014 to less than $45 a barrel today, the Saudi monarchy continued to maintain high production levels at a loss, determined to deal blows to competition from the increased flow of U.S. oil produced by fracking and from expanded production in Russia."

I waited for two weeks to see if any reader would raise an objection to the above statement. There was none.

A barrel of oil has a "rock bottom price." That price is determined by how much labor, energy (again labor), and capital (accumulated labor) is used to produce a barrel of oil. Every dollar above that price is the result of supply and demand; it's profit.

The condition of the oil well (accessibility, pressure, and composition) determines how much labor is needed to explore the well and how much labor is needed to produce oil products such as gasoline, and these factors determine that price, "the rock bottom price."

For Iran, that price is about $9 to $10 per barrel of oil, and it's close for Saudi Arabia. The well is pressurized naturally by its own associated gas, and all that is needed is to drill a hole in the reservoir, which can be several thousand meters below ground. Then all that is required is to break the pressure from about 5,000 psi [pounds per square inch] to about 2,000 psi, which is usually needed for separation facilities.

So, if Saudi oil can be sold above $10 to $15 per barrel, it will not be "at a loss" but "at less profit."

Saudi Arabia was not "determined to deal blows to competition from the increased flow of U.S. oil produced by fracking and from expanded production in Russia." It was just determined to keep the head of its capitalist ruling class and the privileged princes above water.

But for fracking or shale oil, that rock bottom price is above $40 per barrel. This is because the oil is locked within sedimentary rock called shale, which must be fractured by high-pressure water blasts. This process needs much more labor and energy, thus the "rock bottom" price is higher.

During 2013 and most of 2014, the demand for oil slowed down, while production kept going up; the price didn't fall and therefore a bubble formed. When that bubble burst in late 2014, the market price of oil fell from over a $100 to $30 per barrel due to a reduction in investment and consumption all over the world, especially in China. That price plunge dealt a blow to the production of oil by means of fracking. Under capitalism, shale oil production is not "economically feasible" when the oil price falls below $40 per barrel.

Saudi Arabia produces a small portion of the world's consumption of oil. So its increase of oil production by 1 or 2 million barrels cannot have caused all the problems the world is facing as the result of the collapse of thousands of projects, and layoffs in this industry that are unprecedented in decades — losses that are caused by a reduction of some $3.2 trillion in oil revenues per year.

It is the world capitalist crisis and slowdown that are dealing blows to U.S. and Russian oil production, not Saudi Arabia.

Editor's note

We thank our reader for this important correction, he's dead right. As he points out, our inaccurate description of how oil prices and production levels are determined obscured the scope and consequences of the world capitalist crisis. Readers will appreciate his clear, concrete explanation of how workers' labor, transforming nature, is the source of all wealth.

The paragraph cited also feeds into a false notion widely promoted within the petty-bourgeois left, in Latin America and among apologists for the capitalist government in Moscow. That is that the collapse in oil prices is the result of a Saudi or U.S.-Saudi conspiracy aimed against rival governments that are heavily dependent on oil revenues. So the correction is essential *politically* as well.

An Aug. 29 article from the Russian news service RT, for example, states, "In an attempt to corner the global market and oust high-cost oil producers like US shale, Saudi-dominated OPEC introduced predatory prices for its oil, pushing crude from $114 a barrel in the summer of 2014 to the current $50."

"Global oil prices are being manipulated [by Riyadh] at the behest of the U.S. not only to overthrow the government of Syria or to pressure Iran, but to strike at Russia itself," asserted Ulson Gunnar last year in the Moscow-based website New Eastern Outlook.

And in a December 2014 speech, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro denounced what he called a U.S.-organized "oil war." It's objective, he said, was "to destroy Russia," and it "also aimed at Venezuela, to try and destroy our revolution and cause an economic collapse."

It's an obligation for class-conscious workers in the U.S. to stand with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela against U.S. imperialism, as we oppose Washington's wars across the globe.

But saying the economic crises that the capitalist system inevitably produces, such as the collapse in oil prices, are a conspiracy by Washington, or Riyadh, amounts to justifying adaptation to one set of capitalist rulers over another.

These arguments obfuscate the need for workers to chart an independent course toward taking power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers, based on proletarian internationalism, in every country around the world.

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help the *Militant* cover labor struggles around the world!

This column gives a voice to those engaged in battle and building solidarity today — including United Gas Workers Union members fighting a Dominion Gas lockout in six eastern states, workers locked out by Honeywell and construction workers demanding safe conditions. I invite those involved in workers' battles to contact me at 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018; or (212) 244-4899; or themilitant@mac.com. We'll work together to ensure your story is told.

— Maggie Trowe

L.A. Farmer John meatpackers push back concessions

LOS ANGELES — After conducting protests to press their demands, workers at Farmer John packinghouse in nearby Vernon voted overwhelmingly Aug. 18 to approve a new two-year contract. The members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770 pushed back company concession demands, shop steward Pedro Albarran told the *Militant*. "They wanted to take away one vacation week, two floating days and to double the health insurance premium. We defeated those."

The unionists scored other gains, including wage increases for all classifications, explicit protection of workers' right to use the restroom, and improved safety enforcement, the UFCW website reported.

The wage increases, weighted toward the lowest tiers, help close the gap between tiers that have existed since the union lost a two-month strike in 1985, when meat bosses were carrying out a big offensive across the U.S.

Members of the Socialist Workers Party spoke with Farmer John workers at shift change Sept. 9. Fernando Sanchez likes the contract. When he went to the medical department for shoulder pain the day before, he learned that 27 people had been there the previous day. "The line is too fast," he said.

Rina Chavarria, with three years on the job, said she had been against the contract, but "the majority voted for it, so I'm with them." The union is key in fighting for safety, she said. "More people should be on the safety committee."

"The contract is good," Enrique Casas said. "We got more money and insurance. The union will be stronger."

"No good," said Francisco, who has worked at the plant for 38 years, adding that the union "has no power."

Making the right to go to the restroom explicit in the contract, even though it is already required by law, was important to many workers, who said bosses complain when they ask to go.

— Bill Arth

Tens of millions of workers carry out one-day strike in India

Tens of millions of public union members in India took part in a one-day strike Sept. 2 against the Bharatiya Janata (Indian People's Party) government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The strike was supported by nearly all major unions and by the Communist Party of India. The unionists call for a $225 monthly minimum wage and universal social security, including a minimum pension of $45 a month. They oppose privatization of government-run industries, contracting out of work and Modi's plans to allow more foreign direct investment in the railway and defense industries.

Official unemployment is more than 7 percent in this country of 1.2 billion people, and the per capita gross domestic product is $6,200, compared with $55,800 in the U.S.

State banks and power stations were closed, public transport was shut down in some states, and protesters blocked railway tracks and roads in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha.

— Maggie Trowe

Workers rally in Mumbai, India, Sept. 2, during massive one-day nationwide strike of tens of millions of public union workers and others demanding increased minimum wage, universal social security payments and against privatization of government-run industries.

Miners demand gov't protect health care, pensions

Continued from front page

the country face similar problems. As the world crisis of capitalism deepens, bosses cut workers and attack wages, working conditions, pensions and medical care.

Recent struggles by Teamsters, Chicago teachers, and Verizon telecom workers have protested the rulers' attacks on workers' pensions.

Most workers have no private pensions. Those who have 401(k) accounts and are able to put money into them are vulnerable to stock market downturns as well as drops in the value of securities the funds are invested in. Social Security retirement benefits, which have never been adequate to cover basic living costs, are being eroded. The government raised the age of eligibility and has threatened further raises, while claiming funds are running out.

Socialist Workers Party presidential candidate Alyson Kennedy, a former coal miner and member of the United Mine Workers of America, and her running mate Osborne Hart joined the rally to extend solidarity.

"The fight for retirement pay and health care is a social question, it can't be solved boss to boss," Kennedy told miners. "Working people, organized and unorganized, need to come together to fight for fully government-funded pensions and medical coverage for all."

'It's not just coal miners'

"It's not just the coal miners, it's every industry," retired miner Dave LaPorte, 58, told the *Militant*. "They're trying to go after all unions and tear them apart piece by piece."

LaPorte and his wife Nancy Faust, a housekeeper, rode the bus from Connellsville, Pennsylvania. LaPorte was forced into retirement when the mine where he worked shut down. He has black lung. The debilitating disease is caused by breathing coal dust and is on the rise as the percentage of union members in coal mining declines. He receives no black lung benefits.

LaPorte thinks a rise in labor resistance is inevitable. "It's got to come, with all that's happened to millions of workers," he said.

Nearly one-third of the 90,000 retired miners in the U.S. live in West Virginia and receive an average monthly pension of $587.

UMWA officials supported passing laws to temporarily divert unused funds from the Abandoned Mine Lands Fund to prop up the pension fund. They urged miners to refrain from wearing symbols of support for Democratic or Republican presidential candidates at the rally to better chances of influencing politicians from both capitalist parties.

Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton — hated by many workers in the coalfields for her March statement that in the name of helping the environment she was "going to put a lot of coal miners and coal companies out of business" — issued a statement the day of the rally pledging support for the bill.

But the next day her husband, former President Bill Clinton, mocked workers in West Virginia and Kentucky for supporting Republican candidate Donald Trump. "The coal people don't like any of us [Democrats] any more," he said. "They blame the president when the sun doesn't come up in the morning now."

"The mines in our area are all closed down," said Terry Shipley, a retired miner from Rivesville, West Virginia. "There's no work for the young people. A lot of them are on pills or the hard stuff." Shipley was a miner for 40 years and now has black lung.

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 13th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MmilitANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

September 27, 1991

LONDON — Police riots and hundreds of arrests have met rebellions of youth in towns across Britain over the last four weeks.

From Cardiff in the South West to Handsworth, Birmingham, and Oxford in the Midlands, to North Shields and Newcastle in the North East, 5,000 people have taken to the streets in battles against police riot squads and militarized cops — the Special Patrol Group.

Parliamentary leaders of both Conservative and Labour parties have condemned the youth and praised the police actions.

The sources of the rebellions are the deteriorating social conditions and accompanying cop brutality. While young people face the prospect of long periods without work, they are the victims of constant police harassment.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED WEEKLY IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 26, 1966

The Peruvian military authorities, acting as both prosecution and judge, sentenced Hugo Blanco, the Trotskyist peasant leader, to 25 years in El Frontón, the grim prison in the harbor of Lima. His comrade and co-defendant Pedro Candala was given 22 years, likewise in El Frontón.

Up to the final moment on Sept. 8, it was feared that the military might carry out the plan they had reportedly envisaged — giving Hugo Blanco the death sentence. Evidently they reconsidered in view of the reaction that was visible even in the small town of Tacna where people lined up for admission into the large hall where the court was held and where the audience clearly favored the prisoners, at times expressing such sympathy that the judge had to clear the court.

THE MILITANT

Official Weekly Organ of the Socialist Workers Party

September 27, 1941

The Seafarers International Union, AFL, has struck 23 American-flag ships with which it has contracts on foreign runs. Twenty of the vessels are now tied up in major Atlantic and Gulf ports and are surrounded by strong picket lines. The number of struck ships is mounting daily as the SIU continues to call off the crews of every contracted foreign run boat as it hits an American port. Strike action was taken to enforce its demands for war bonus payments.

The success of the union in completely tying up the struck ships for two weeks would have led to the capitulation of the bosses in most strikes. This time, however, the United States Maritime Commission has intervened and instructed the shipowners not to negotiate with the union until the strike has been called off.

US power declines in Asia

Continued from front page

ing of heads of state of the world's larger industrialized countries. He was in Vientiane, Laos, Sept. 6-8 for a meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Media reports of Obama's tour focused on diplomatic rebuffs, including a clash between security officials over Obama's arrival in Hangzhou and a canceled meeting with Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte.

Obama pushed unsuccessfully at the ASEAN meeting for a sharp declaration opposing Beijing's expanding claims to islands in the South China Sea.

In a visit to Asia in 2009 Obama called himself "America's first Pacific president." He has made 11 trips to Asia during his two terms. "This is where the action's going to be when it comes to commerce and trade," he told reporters at the ASEAN meeting.

The administration's "Asia pivot," announced in 2011, assumed the winding down of U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. But conflicts and instability in the Mideast have escalated.

While Washington continues to seek Beijing's collaboration, along with Moscow's, to help stabilize the world, the pivot was intended to strengthen military and trade alliances with other Asian nations to counter Beijing's more assertive role in the region.

Washington "assumed that a merely symbolic reassertion of U.S. power and resolve would be enough to make China back off," noted Hugh White, an Australian journalist and former government defense adviser, the *Financial Times* reported Sept. 5. But "China's assertive posture in the East and South China Sea today is strong evidence that they were wrong."

China's economic weight

While in Laos, Obama announced a $90 million contribution to help clear U.S. bombs there — acknowledging but not apologizing for this "unintended" cost of Washington's brutal war in Vietnam. From 1964 to 1973 U.S. warplanes dropped 2 million tons of bombs over Laos in 580,000 missions. Eighty million cluster bombs remained undetonated. These have killed some 20,000 people since the war's end.

At the same time, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced investments in Laos worth billions, including a hydropower project, a rail line to China, and a $1.6 billion special economic zone.

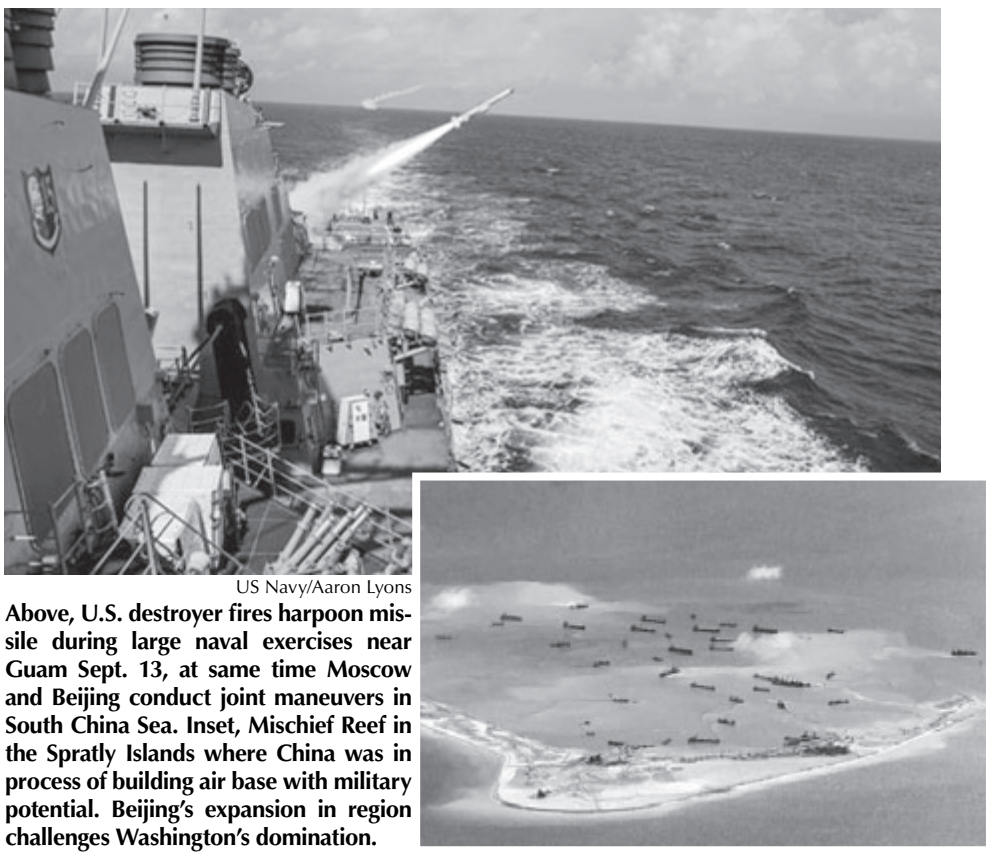
Beijing has opened a new rail line to Afghanistan, opening an alternative trade route for that land-locked country, where it is already the leading foreign investor. In 2011, then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced that Washington would sponsor the construction of new transport links to Afghanistan, but nothing happened.

A centerpiece of Washington's Asia pivot was the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade pact intended as a counter to China, signed in February with 11 other Pacific nations. It covers 40 percent of the world's gross domestic product. But Obama still hasn't presented the pact to Congress for ratification, and the two leading presidential candidates have criticized it.

Relative decline in U.S. power

The U.S. imperialist rulers came out of World War II as the victor. This included naval supremacy in the Pacific and South China Sea. It was China, above all, whose land, resources and cheap labor the U.S. rulers lusted for.

But the war had opened a new upsurge of struggle across Asia, Africa and Latin America against colonial rule and imperialist domination. A revolution by the workers and peasants ended foreign domination of China and made it clear that any intervention by Washington would be fiercely resisted. Washington's plans to intervene were further thwarted by mass protests by U.S. troops across Asia demanding to go home.



US Navy/Aaron Lyons

Above, U.S. destroyer fires harpoon missile during large naval exercises near Guam Sept. 13, at same time Moscow and Beijing conduct joint maneuvers in South China Sea. Inset, Mischief Reef in the Spratly Islands where China was in process of building air base with military potential. Beijing's expansion in region challenges Washington's domination.

For three decades until 1979, Washington refused to recognize the government of China, instead backing the Republic of China government on Taiwan with massive military and economic aid.

With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from 1989-91, Washington and its closest imperialist allies believed, mistakenly, that they had won the Cold War and would reap new markets for investment and trade. They anticipated similar openings in China.

At the same time, they acted as if they now had free rein to impose their will politically. At the ASEAN conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, in 2010, Hillary Clinton lectured Chinese Foreign Minister

Continued on page 9

Standing Rock Sioux lead fight for rights, dignity

Continued from front page

finding delegation.

"Our tribe has opposed the Dakota Access pipeline since we first learned about it in 2014," wrote David Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, in the *New York Times* Aug. 24. "Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation."

On Sept. 9 the Sioux won an important victory. The U.S. Department of Justice, Department of the Army and Department of the Interior announced they would put a halt to any construction within 20 miles of Lake Oahe.

"Important issues raised by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other tribal nations and their members regarding the Dakota Access pipeline specifically, and pipeline-related decision-making generally, remain," the joint statement said. "It is now incumbent on all of us to develop a path forward that serves the broadest public interest." But the decision is only temporary.

The tribe had filed court papers in district court on Sept. 2 seeking to halt construction on sacred and historic sites in the path of the pipeline. The next day, Energy Transfer Partners, the builder of the pipeline, sent bulldozers to begin removing topsoil from the area.

Protesters who tried to stop the earth-moving machines from desecrating the sites were met with company security guards, attack dogs and pepper spray. Six people were bitten and at least 30 pepper-sprayed. Since then protesters have camped along the county road, in sight of the area, to make sure the company doesn't try to return.

Knowing a court decision was imminent, thousands of protesters, known as protectors, marched Sept. 9 from the main encampment to the site of the confrontation. Many then caravaned to protest at the state Capitol in Bismarck where the court is located.

When District Court Judge James Boasberg rejected the tribe's request to halt construction, the three federal agencies put out the Sept. 9 joint statement barring further work on the pipeline pending more consultation. The agencies said they would invite tribes to government-to-government discussions.

These same government agencies had given Energy Transfer Partners a green light for the $3.8 billion, four-state project that would start oil flowing from North Dakota to southern Illinois by the end of the year. The Sept. 9 government statement noted, "[We] have seen thousands of demonstrators come together peacefully, with support of sovereign tribal governments … to voice heartfelt concerns about the environment and historic, sacred sites."

'We are going to beat this'

"This is the beginning of unifying indigenous people," said Andrew Hěska White Mountain of the Hunkpapa Lakota Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. "Stopping the pipeline is for the future of our people. If it goes through, it will destroy our land and water. They desecrate our burial sites. They will not respect our elders. We are going to beat this."

There are deeper historical reasons for the size and breadth of the response to the assault on the reservation here. In its relentless march west, Washington and its capitalist social relations brutalized the native people, slaughtering tens of thousands and driving those who survived onto the reservations, where they face oppressive conditions and few opportunities.

The Standing Rock reservation, home to some 8,000 members of the Standing Rock Sioux, occupies over 2 million acres in North and South Dakota. The unemployment rate on the reservation was a staggering 60 percent in 2014 reports the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

While Native Americans were promised sovereignty on the reservations by Washington, they face invasive attacks wherever the bosses smell profit.

This assault on dignity and sovereignty led to the size and breadth of the mobilization here.

More than 200 flags line the dirt road leading into the main camp, each presented by delegations from other tribes arriving at the camp over recent months. The population of the camp rises and falls, but often numbers in the thousands.

Tents and tepees fill the land here near the banks of the Cannonball River. The slogans "Water is Life" and "No DAPL [Dakota Access pipeline]" are written on cars, posters and banners throughout the camp.

At the heart of the camp lies a constantly burning fire pit, surrounded by a kitchen and dining area, a place for meetings and for donations. Before each meal, a tribal elder says a traditional prayer. The camp is abuzz with conversations between members of different tribes and generations.

After the government agencies announced the pause in construction of the pipeline, Mike McFeely, a columnist for the *Forum* of Fargo-Moorhead, tried to nudge Native American protesters to leave. "They won," he wrote. "There is nothing to protest."

That sentiment found no echo in the camp. Supporters continue to arrive. Donations of clothing and camping gear are coming too, anticipating the arrival of the cold North Dakota winter. "We need to keep the camp up to keep pressure on the federal government," many people told us.

US Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes

In *New International* no. 11

"The exploiters have not been able to resolve the increasing stagnation and vulnerability of the world capitalist system."

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Month of action begins in Cuba against US embargo

Includes solidarity with Puerto Rico, Oscar López

BY EMMA JOHNSON

"We Remember: Solidarity against the Blockade and Terrorism," is the theme of a series of days of action involving workers and farmers across Cuba over the next two months. Initiated by the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), the events will highlight U.S. imperialism's more than 50 years of aggression against the Cuban Revolution.

The events will lead up to the Oct. 27 U.N. General Assembly vote on a Cuban resolution to denounce the embargo.

Coinciding with "We Remember," the Committees for Defense of the Revolution, the neighborhood organizations across Cuba, will conduct public hearings to denounce the negative impact of Washington's embargo.

During his March visit to Cuba, President Barack Obama told the Cuban people, "It's time, now, for us to leave the past behind." But Cuban working people are not willing to forget the reasons they made the revolution in 1959 — overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista — or the blood shed defending the gains of the revolution from Washington's attempts to overturn it.

The days of action will emphasize "the campaign of lifting the genocidal U.S. economic blockade against Cuba; the return of the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo; and denouncing the offensive of imperialism and the oligarchies against revolutionary and progressive governments of Latin America and the Caribbean that threatens the peace and stability of all nations," ICAP said in a Sept. 5 press release.

The events also overlap with an annual week of solidarity with the independence movement in Puerto Rico and commemorations of the U.S.-backed coup that overthrew the government of Salvador Allende in Chile and installed the Pinochet dictatorship in 1973.

Workers at the Hotel Copacabana, along with members of the Italian community in Havana, kicked off "We Remember" with a tribute to Fabio Di Celmo Sept. 4. Di Celmo, a 32-year-old Italian tourist, was killed in 1997 by a bomb placed by Raúl Ernesto Cruz León, a mercenary from El Salvador, who was financed by counterrevolutionary Cuban-American groups in Florida.

Those groups were hoping to deepen the economic crisis in Cuba caused by the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, which had accounted for 85 percent of Cuba's trade, by scaring off tourists.

On Sept. 12, ICAP commemorated the anniversary of the arrest of five Cuban revolutionaries in Florida in 1998. They became known as the Cuban 5 over the 16-year-long international campaign to win their freedom. The Five had been gathering information on rightist groups there to prevent more attacks on Cuba, like the one that killed Di Celmo. They were framed and imprisoned on conspiracy charges by the U.S. government. The last three of the Five were freed and returned to Cuba when Obama and Cuban President Raúl Castro announced plans to re-establish diplomatic relations in December 2014.

"What will ensure justice is solidarity," said ICAP President Kenia Serrano at the opening of a photo exhibit on the Five and in solidarity with Cuba. Among the groups present was U.S. Pastors for Peace, which is currently facing attacks on their tax-exempt status by the IRS because of its solidarity with Cuba.

Solidarity with Puerto Rico

In Manzanillo, Cuba, students at the Blas Roca Calderío Teaching College held an assembly that took up the example of the Five, the fight against the U.S. embargo and the fight to free Oscar López Rivera, a Puerto Rican independence fighter imprisoned in the U.S. for more than 35 years. The meeting was covered by *La Demajagua* newspaper.

La Demajagua

Students at Blas Roca Calderío Teaching College in Manzanillo, Cuba, discuss impact of U.S. embargo and importance of solidarity with Puerto Rico independence fight Sept. 12.

Along with deepening their knowledge on the effects of Washington's "economic, commercial and financial blockade of our country," Nohemí Rabaza Fernández, ICAP representative for Granma province, told students, "we want you to join the just cause for the independence of our sister Caribbean island and for freedom for López Rivera."

During the discussion, Beatriz Castellano Gorgoso proposed that students form a committee in solidarity with López Rivera.

A Sept. 21 event will honor Chile's former foreign minister, Orlando Letelier, who was assassinated in 1976 in Washington, D.C., by Pinochet's agents. An Oct. 6 ceremony will recall the 73 people killed when CIA-backed terrorists blew up a Cubana Airlines flight from Barbados that year.

October 8 activities will mark the assassination of Che Guevara by U.S. forces in Bolivia in 1967. Guevara, an Argentine revolutionary, fought in the Cuban Revolution and became a central leader of the victorious revolutionary government.

"The blockade imposed by the United States persists," Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez told a Sept. 9 Havana press conference, saying the damages last year amounted to $4.6 billion. Last year, for the 24th year in a row, the U.N. General Assembly called for an end to the embargo. Only the U.S. and Israeli governments voted against the resolution.

Momentum grows for Oct. 9 'Free Oscar López' protest

BY SETH GALINSKY

Leaders of several major religious denominations in Puerto Rico have called on all who support the fight to win freedom for imprisoned independence fighter Oscar López Rivera to join an Oct. 9 rally and concert in Washington, D.C.

Catholic Archbishop of San Juan Roberto González Nieves, Methodist Bishop Juan Vera, Lutheran Bishop Felipe Lozada Montañez and Heriberto Martínez, secretary of the Biblical Societies of Puerto Rico, joined Clarisa López, Oscar's daughter, and leaders of the Coalition to Free Oscar López at a press conference Sept. 8 in San Juan.

"Oscar López Rivera has served a very long and disproportionate sentence," González said. "That's why as well as for humanitarian reasons, the bishops of Puerto Rico, members of other churches, politicians of all the ideologies and the majority of the representatives of civil society have asked for his release."

"The support of the Puerto Rican people is practically unanimous," he added.

López was arrested in 1981, accused by the U.S. government of being a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation of Puerto Rico (FALN). Lacking evidence linking him to any violent acts, prosecutors framed him for "seditious conspiracy."

His continued support for independence, along with resistance to years in solitary confinement, solidarity with other prisoners and his dignity, has made López a symbol of the fight against Puerto Rico's colonial subjugation by Washington.

Thirty-eight city councils in Puerto Rico have called for his release, as has every union federation on the island.

In the United States the AFL-CIO labor federation, Service Employees International Union executive board, Communications Workers of America, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees unions have also joined the call to free López.

Among the many international groups and individuals backing the fight are the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization, the American Association of Jurists, the Senate of Mexico, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples and Rev. Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

Ingrid Vila Biaggi, a leader of the coalition in Puerto Rico, said that among the participants in the Oct. 9 meeting and concert will be musicians Danny Rivera, Roy Brown and René (Residente) Pérez and theater group Jóvenes del 98 (The youth of '98).

Board to protect bondholders

The fight to free López is reinforced by opposition to the financial control board, just imposed on the island by Washington and given vast powers over Puerto Rico's budget and fiscal policy for the next four years. This includes the right to lower the minimum wage there for those under 25 years old to $4.25 an hour.

The board is part of legislation signed by President Barack Obama to ensure payment of Puerto Rico's $70 billion debt to bondholders and hedge funds. The colonial regime of Gov. Alejandro García says it cannot pay the debt without major restructuring. It did not make the July 1 payment of nearly $1 billion.

Obama announced the appointment of the board Aug. 31, four chosen by the Republican Party and three by Democrats. The majority are Puerto Rican, including Carlos García, CEO of Bay-Boston Managers and former president of Puerto Rico's Government Development Bank. He is considered the architect of Law 7, which gave the government power to suspend public workers' union contracts and override labor laws.

Other board members include insurance executives, past bank presidents and bankruptcy lawyers and judges, all of whom can be counted on to minimize any "haircuts" on payments to capitalist bondholders.

Hundreds of protesters blocked entrances to the Puerto Rican Chamber of Commerce's Aug. 31 conference in San Juanto orient business people on how the board would function.

In addition to the debt to bondholders, the government owes $45 billion to workers' pension funds, which are rapidly running out of money. Many of its "assets" are loans to workers — including about $1 billion in mortgages — who are less and less able to pay.

Over the last several years successive governments in Puerto Rico have laid off thousands of public workers, increased sales taxes, closed schools and raised the retirement age to push the debt obligations onto the backs of working people.

For more information on Oscar López and the Oct. 9 event in Washington, visit: freeoscarlopeznow.com or boricuahumanrights.org.

Che: 'Society must be converted into a gigantic school'

The Spanish edition of Socialism and Man in Cuba *is one of Pathfinder's September Books of the Month. Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, wrote the selection in 1965 as a letter to Carlos Quijano, editor of the Uruguayan weekly* Marcha. *From his role as a revolutionary combatant to popularizing voluntary labor in Cuba, Guevara set an example of a communist leader both in word and deed. After nine years of service to the revolution in Cuba, Guevara left in 1965 to participate in revolutionary struggles abroad — first in the Congo. From November 1966 to October 1967, he led a guerrilla movement in Bolivia. He was wounded and captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation on Oct. 8, 1967, and murdered the following day. Copyright © 1992. Reprinted by permission.*

Prensa Latina

Che visits Cuban factory in 1962. Socialism can't be built "with the dull instruments of capitalism," he said. It needs "development of consciousness in which there is a new scale of values."

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

In capitalist society man is controlled by a pitiless law usually beyond his comprehension. The alienated human specimen is tied to society as a whole by an invisible umbilical cord: the law of value. This law acts upon all aspects of his life, shaping his course and destiny.

The laws of capitalism, which are blind and are invisible to ordinary people, act upon the individual without his being aware of it. He sees only the vastness of a seemingly infinite horizon before him. That is how it is painted by capitalist propagandists who purport to draw a lesson from the example of Rockefeller — whether or not it is true — about the possibilities of success. The amount of poverty and suffering required for a Rockefeller to emerge, and the amount of depravity entailed in the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude, are left out of the picture, and it is not always possible for the popular forces to make these concepts clear. …

In any case the road to success is pictured as beset with perils — perils that, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance; the way is lonely. Furthermore, it is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others.

I would now like to try to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama of the building of socialism, in his dual existence as a unique being and as a member of society.

I think the place to start is to recognize his quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in the individual consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them. The process is two-sided. On the one side, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits himself to a conscious process of self-education.

The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in the individual consciousness — in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily — but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality, however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first — a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibilities, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neocolonial regimes — these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest.

A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation. Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual flight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley. And you wind up there after having traveled a long distance with many crossroads, and it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man.

That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive — especially of a social character.

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to muster a powerful response to moral incentives. Retaining their effect, however, requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new scale of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school. …

In this period of the building of socialism we can see the new man being born. His image is not yet completely finished — it never will be, since the process goes forward hand in hand with the development of new economic forms.

Aside from those whose lack of education makes them take the solitary road toward satisfying their own personal ambitions, there are those — even within this new panorama of a unified march forward — who have a tendency to walk separate from the masses accompanying them. What is important, however, is that each day men are acquiring ever more consciousness of the need for their incorporation into society and, at the same time, of their importance as the motor of that society.

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—SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT—

Fight for health care, retirement for all

The following statement was released Sept. 14 by Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. president, and Osborne Hart, SWP candidate for vice president.

We joined thousands of retired and working miners, their families and supporters as they rallied in Washington, D.C., Sept. 8 to protest attacks by coal bosses and the government on pensions and health care for retirees won in past labor battles. The Socialist Workers Party stands shoulder to shoulder with miners in their efforts to defend their future.

Tens of millions of other workers — working, unemployed and retired — face the same challenge, attacks by the bosses and the government on their right to health care and retirement. This social crisis can't be solved boss by boss. Working people, organized and unorganized, need to join together to fight for full government-funded pensions and medical coverage as a social right for all.

Cradle-to-grave health care is what *all* workers need. We can't let them be tied to company profitability, nor accept deeper and deeper government attacks on Medicare and Social Security as the rulers let their funding run out.

Mine owners and an increasing number of other employers are using bankruptcy courts to weasel out of union contracts and obligations to fund retirement benefits and medical care for the workers they exploited for profits and now try to discard like worn-out machines.

The working class produces all the wealth, as our labor transforms natural resources into things people need. But under capitalism the bosses expropriate the lion's share. They use their wealth and power to exploit workers here and abroad. The crisis today in their dog-eat-dog capitalist system is putting increasing pressure on the bosses to cut away at our wages, pensions, health care and political rights.

"Working people and our unions have a vital stake not only in defending what we've fought for and won from the employing class, but above all in building a mass social and political movement of the working class *to extend these conquests as universal rights* — not means-tested charity — *for all*," Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes explains in *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege and Learning Under Capitalism*. "Through our labor, the working class, in this country and worldwide, produces more than enough wealth to provide education, health care, housing, and retirement to every human being on earth, for a lifetime."

We can fight to rebuild our unions to lead all workers in this struggle. In carrying this fight forward we will transform ourselves. We'll gain confidence in our capacity to overthrow the dictatorship of capital, establish our own workers and farmers government and join the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Capitalist trade slows, bosses step up attacks

Continued from front page

negative rates on more than $13 trillion of government and corporate bonds. These schemes have utterly failed to increase investment or production.

"The sense that central banks have control over the economy leads to a feeling of comfort in that at least 'somebody' is in control," wrote Matthew Kerkhoff in an Aug. 29 Dow Theory Letters column titled "The Illusion of Power." He added, "It can be difficult to swallow the idea that gyrations in our economy are uncontrollable, even though that's really how it is."

Because their profit rates have tended to fall for decades, the capitalists have held back on investing in capacity-expanding plants and production. Instead they've turned to speculation on stocks, bonds, derivatives and other forms of commercial paper, or hoarding their cash. And they've attacked the working class, cutting jobs, safety conditions and rights of working people in an effort to boost profitability at our expense.

"Net investment has been running at the lowest rates since the Great Depression," notes MarketWatch, "suggesting that U.S. investment itself is in a depression." Since the steep economic downturn of 2008-2009, employment in U.S. manufacturing is down nearly 1.5 million workers and the median family annual income has dropped more than $3,000.

Inventories have swelled. "It isn't because companies ramped up production," economist Leslie Norton told *Barron's* in an Aug. 22 interview. "They bought the lie that consumer spending would turn up any moment, and produced at the same pace. Now they find themselves with a monster inventory overhang."

Slumping trade worldwide

Combined with declining production, trade has tumbled. One of the best indications of this is the Baltic Dry Index, which measures how much it costs to ship raw materials, from grains to coal to metals. The index has plummeted from 11,000 points in May 2008 to below 300 earlier this year, the worst it's ever been. It's just below 800 today, still historically low.

One important factor is that shipping bosses in China and elsewhere had ordered a slew of new vessels, betting on an upturn in trade, but the opposite has been the case. "Shipyards have been shrinking" and "shipowners have gone from ordering ships in droves to scrapping them," reported the *Journal*.

The recent bankruptcy of Hanjin Shipping, the seventh largest container carrier worldwide, has stranded dozens of ships carrying more than half a million cargo containers valued at $14 billion at sea. They were denied access to ports over disputes with terminal bosses over who would pay docking fees, container storage and unloading bills.

Workers stuck on these vessels face dire conditions with diminishing supplies of food, water and fuel. Because of cuts in air-conditioning, "the heat is driving the crew crazy," the captain of a Hanjin-operated ship in the South China Sea told the *Wall Street Journal*.

At major U.S. ports, from New York to Georgia to California, trucking companies recently purchased tens of thousands of big rigs, but many sit idle today.

As commodity prices have fallen, U.S. farm incomes this year will hit their lowest level since 2009. Farmers are expected to harvest the largest U.S. corn and soybean crops in history, but increased production worldwide means heightened competition and U.S. farmers' income will decline for the third straight year.

Facing prices below their costs of production, many farmers are cutting expenditures on basic equipment. Deere & Co., which produces tractors and combines, has announced a series of layoffs this year, cutting over 2,000 jobs.

World trade gloom

The worldwide character of the crisis was highlighted at the recent meeting of the G-20 capitalist regimes held in China Sept. 4-5. The gathering was marked by the growing economic place of Beijing in world production and trade, as well as the growing trade rivalries propelled by the worldwide capitalist crisis.

The meeting also reflected Moscow's heightened role in world politics, from Eastern Europe to the Middle East. It was a sharp contrast to the 2014 G-20 meeting, where Russian President Vladimir Putin was treated as a pariah by U.S. and European capitalist rulers, leaving the meeting before it ended saying he needed to get some sleep.

The G-20 is composed of the imperialist governments of Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. Others include Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, South Africa and Turkey. The European Union is also a member.

"The global outlook for growth remains subdued," said a report issued by the International Monetary Fund following the meeting. "Despite record-low interest rates, investment continues to disappoint, reflecting demand conditions as well as high corporate sector debt and weak financial sector balance sheets in many countries. Weak investment further dampens underlying potential growth."

S. Carolina cop fired in killing of Hammond

BY SETH GALINSKY

The cop who shot and killed Zachary Hammond, 19, in Seneca, South Carolina, in July 2015 was fired Sept. 9. Police Lt. Mark Tiller had been on paid leave since the shooting.

Tiller shot Hammond, who is Caucasian, as he tried to drive away during a marijuana sting operation aimed at his passenger, Tori Morton, 23.

Hammond's family and others organized several protests in Seneca and in Greenville that brought together friends, family and Black civil rights groups like the Freedom Fighters to demand Tiller be fired and charged in the killing. They insisted the cops release a police dash cam video of the shooting.

On Oct. 27, 2015, North Carolina state prosecutor Chrissy Adams announced that no charges would be filed against Tiller. She released the video the same day.

In the video Tiller can be heard saying, "I'll blow your f---ing head off." The video clearly shows the cop shooting an unarmed Hammond as the car passes him by. An autopsy confirmed that the youth had been shot "from back to front."

Tiller claimed he fired in self-defense because he feared Hammond was going to run him over. Despite the video footage showing Hammond had driven around Tiller, Adams refused to indict the cop.

In March of this year the Seneca city government agreed to settle a civil suit filed by Hammond's parents, paying them $2.15 million.

In a statement after Tiller's firing, the Hammonds thanked those who "stood shoulder to shoulder" with them. "All lives matter," they said, "and it is an injustice to each and every American when an officer-related shooting is not handled with sensitivity and absolute transparency."

US power declines in Asia

Continued from page 6

Yang Jiechi that Washington had a "national interest" in the South China Sea and told Beijing to stay out. Yang warned his Southeast Asian hosts in response, "China is a big country. And you are all small countries."

Since then, Beijing has accelerated work to build artificial island military bases in the South China Sea. Russian President Vladimir Putin backed Beijing's stance when he attended the G-20 summit. The Russian and Chinese navies began eight days of drills in the South China Sea Sept. 12, their largest ever joint operations.

The Chinese government is also building its first overseas naval base in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa, and in August pledged increased military aid to the Syrian government.

The massive growth of capitalist industry and trade in China over the past 30 years has meant increasing competition for U.S. imperialism. This drives the Chinese rulers to seek a political and military role in the Pacific commensurate with their economic strength. They continue to make headway at Washington's expense.

Socialist Workers Party announces $100,000 fund

The 2016 SWP Party-Building Fund will run from Sept. 22 to Dec. 7. It's an annual drive that helps make it possible to bring the party and its program to the working class. To make a contribution, contact the party branch nearest you, listed on page 8.